

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 01984 061449Z

43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: FRG PRESS, OPPOSITION HITS BERLIN ACCESS
SITUATION

REF: BONN 1877

SUMMARY: RECENT TRANSIT TRAFFIC PROBLEMS AGAIN APPEARED
PROMINENTLY IN THE NEWS IN BONN FEBRUARY 6, WITH LEAD
STORIES CONCERNING REPORTS OF NIXON-KISSINGER MEETINGS
WITH GROMYKO AND OPPOSITION CALLS FOR SPECIAL MINISTER
BAHR AND CHANCELLERY STATE SECRETARY GAUS TO REPORT TO
BUNDESTAG TO EXPLAIN SEEMING FRG RETICENCE IN THE FACE OF
RECENT GDR BEHAVIOR. GAUS WILL MEET GDR REP NIER IN
EAST BERLIN TOMORROW. END SUMMARY.

1. DIE WELT'S LEAD STORY THIS MORNING WAS HEADLINED
"U.S. CONCERN ABOUT TRANSIT CHICANERY". THE NEWSPAPER'S
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PAGE 02 BONN 01984 061449Z

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT NIXON

AND SECRETARY KISSINGER HAD LEFT NO DOUBT IN CONVERSATIONS WITH SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO THAT DEVELOPMENTS IN AND AROUND BERLIN WERE BEING VERY CAREFULLY WATCHED. THE ACCOUNT WENT ON TO SAY THAT GROMYKO HAD BEEN TOLD THAT INTERFERENCE WITH TRANSIT TRAFFIC WAS CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT OF THE QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. OTHER NEWSPAPERS ALSO FEATURED THIS NEWS REPORT, BUT LESS PROMINENTLY. THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE FOR EXAMPLE, IN REFERRING TO DISCUSSIONS WITH GROMYKO ON BERLIN ACCESS PROBLEMS, COMMENTED "BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT BOTH SIDES DID NOT WANT TO DRAMATIZE THE BERLIN QUESTION OR TO ENCUMBER THEIR OTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH IT."

2. MOST OTHER DAILY PAPERS, INCLUDING BONN'S GENERAL-ANZEIGER, CONCENTRATED ON THE "NEW CONTROVERSY" STIRRED UP BY OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN ABELEIN WHEN HE CHARGED THE BRANDT GOVERNMENT WITH ACTING COMPLACENT, BEFOGGED AND CONFUSED IN THE FACE OF RECENT GDR "CHICANERY" ALONG TRANSIT ROUTES. ABELEIN CALLED FOR BAHR AND GAUS TO APPEAR BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG'S INNER-GERMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE TO EXPLAIN THIS GOVERNMENT BEHAVIOR.

3. GAUS IS NOW SCHEDULED TO TRAVEL TO EAST BERLIN FEBRUARY 10 TO MEET NIER, RATHER THAN HAVING THE MEETING IN BONN AS REPORTED REFTEL. (FYI: REASON GIVEN BY THE BN GROUP FOR THE CHANGE WAS SIMPLY THAT GAUS HAD OFFERED TO ACCOMMODATE HIMSELF TO NIER'S BUSY SCHEDULE.) COMMENT: AS GAUS TRAVELS TO EAST BERLIN, HE LEAVES BEHIND IN BONN A GROWING CONTROVERSY CONCERNING THE FRL'S HANDLING OF THE CURRENT TRANSIT DIFFICULTIES. ALTHOUGH THIS CONTROVERSY HAS NOT YET REACHED THE POINT WHERE IT DOMINATES THE NEWS HERE, OPPOSITION STATEMENTS AND TACTICS HAVE CERTAINLY HEATED IT UP DURING THE LAST COUPLE OF DAYS.
HILLENBRAND

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